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A person is seldom, if ever, convicted of sorcery. I am reasonably certain that there were many fewer occasions on which sorcery was actually practiced than there were cases of sickness and death attributed to this cause. I was unable to discover anyone who would admit to having practiced sorcery, and the Kwoma themselves were unable to convict any sorcerer during my stay, despite their constant efforts to do so. This evidence should not, of course, be taken as proof that men never practice sorcery, but as indicating the probability that they rarely do so. 754

Mar's nervous breakdown illustrates how sorcery works from the point of view of the person sorcerized and how it may be used as an explanation for neurotic anxiety. One evening shortly after Mar began his courtship of Aya we heard him exchanging shouts with someone down the mountainside. Later he came to my house and told me that he had been arguing with Waramus. The latter had discovered that Mar wanted to marry Aya and had shouted: "You stay away from my daughter; you are nothing but an excrement eater. Do you think that I am going to let her marry a lazy person like you, and one who is her relative, too?" When Mar had told me this, he asked plaintively, "Do you think that I am an excrement eater?" I reassured him. He then bit his underlip, raised his hand, and shook it as though he were balancing a spear, "That damned Waramus! I am going to fight him tomorrow and break his nose." I asked, "Why don't you do it now, Mar?" and he replied, "It is too dark, but I'll do it tomorrow." 159 • 754

Mar did not carry out his threat, nor did he make any move to see Aya for the next few days. A week later he went with several of his *brothers* and *sisters* and his betrothed to work on their garden. Three days later Fit came running back from the garden and told us that Mar was dying. He said that Mar had had a nightmare the previous night and that his father's ghost had appeared and tried to take his soul away. We took some medicine and went back to the garden with Fit and Wof, who had also been told of Mar's sickness. When we arrived at Mar's bush house, he was moan- [787]

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159 754 [129] ing on his bark slab bed. He seemed unable to talk and could only groan inarticulately. We took his temperature and found that it was normal. When we asked him where the pain was, he shook his head, refusing to answer. Wof then diagnosed the sickness as the result of sorcery and said, "Well, if he dies, he dies, that's all." This elicited a groan from Mar. We told him that we had some very strong medicine which would counteract sorcery, at which he lifted his head and looked at us with a doglike expression and then took the Eno's salts which we gave him. We suggested that he go home, for the bush house was damp and lonely, but he groaned and shook his head at this suggestion, indicating that he could not make it. Wof then gathered some nettle leaves, formed them into a cone, into which he muttered a prayer, and then rubbed them over Mar's chest and belly. This made Mar gasp and come out of his lethargy enough to mumble that he believed Waramus was sorcerizing him for courting Aya. We finally raised him to his feet. Leaning heavily on us, he swayed and staggered but was able to walk. As the trip progressed, he seemed to become stronger and for the last part of the journey walked unaided, but when we arrived at his home he fell groaning on his bed, where he stayed for two days without speaking. Wof meanwhile approached Waramus, who denied that he had sorcerized Mar, but said that he still did not want him to court his daughter.

Mar did not leave his house for over a week, gradually recovering his voice and his strength. He believed that Waramus had sorcerized him but had stopped after being accused by Wof, and that this had saved his life. Waramus denied Wof's accusation, and as far as I was able to determine his denial was truthful. The case would have progressed in much the same way, however, whether he had done so or not. Thus it is evident that sorcery functions as an explanation for sickness and that accusations are made against persons who are feared, and finally that the actual performance of black magic is not pertinent.[33]

[787] [33] The fact that Mar had a nightmare in which his father's ghost attempted to take his soul suggests that his sickness may have been due to

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When a man does resort to sorcery, he is reputed to use the following technique. First he either steals or gets someone to steal sorcery material[34] from the person whom he wishes to injure. Then he either gives it to a noted sorcerer[35] to whom he pays a fee or, if he is confident in his own powers, proceeds himself. The sorcerer puts the sorcery material in a special, narrow-necked clay pot and places it on the fire. When the pot and its contents are very hot, he pours a small quantity of cold water into it. If the sorcery material completely disappears in the burst of steam which ensues, the victim will die; if some fragments remain when the pot cools, he will merely become very sick. The operator may not drink water during the process or the sorcery will not be effective. Another type of sorcery consists of inserting in the victim's food a white powder purported to be poisonous. Whether this powder is actually harmful I was unable to discover.

All deaths are believed to result from sorcery. Death repeatedly proves to the Kwoma the efficacy of this type of magic and increases everyone's fear of and anger against sorcerers. This is particularly true in the case of close relatives of the deceased. When a person dies, one of his relatives tolls the house tamberan gong in a slow, measured beat to announce the event to the tribe. I was on a hunting expedition with Sof, a young man who had recently returned from working on a white plantation, when the gongs of Sombundura house tamberan began to toll. He stopped in his tracks, and his jaws began to work. He said nothing for a minute and then in a very emotional voice spoke of the evils of sorcery. "This is a bad place. All anyone can think of is sorcery. That is all the old men think of. We young men who have worked for the whites are going to rebel against it. We are going to round up all the old men who practice sorcery and

sexual anxiety which was rooted in the Oedipus situation and which was evoked at this time by his courtship with Aya and the threats of Waramus.

[34] The Kwoma believe that food leavings, blood, sperm, and the feces of infants are effective materials for sorcery.

[35] No one ever publicly admits that he is a sorcerer, for to do so might mean death or ostracism. Many persons are believed to be powerful sorcerers and privately admit it, if it is to their advantage to do so.